

**Fashion District  
Board of Directors Retreat  
SUMMARY  
March 31, 2017**

On March 31, 2017, the Board of Directors of The Downtown Fashion District held a Board Retreat. Objectives of the retreat included:

- Reflect on the work and progress of the organization;
- Consider priorities for the future; and
- Establish a Vision for the District.

The retreat was facilitated by Kathleen Rawson, CEO of Downtown Santa Monica.

Workshop attendees, including Fashion District Board and Staff members, included:

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Staff Members</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Mark Chatoff	Ariana Gomez	Barry Gold
Laurie Sale	Jasmine Ramos	I Hassan
Laurie Rosen	Jackie Sanchez	
Linda Becker	Randall Tampa	
Mark Levy	Rena Leddy	
Jessica Lewensztain		
Brad Luster		
Steve Hirsh		
John Remeny		
Elisa Keller		
Matthew Haverim		

The agenda for the workshop included:

1. Goals and Objectives for the Day
2. Review of an online and telephone surveys of board and staff priorities
3. Discussion: Brainstorm on issues and advocacy and determine priorities
4. Discussion: Tactics to advance top priorities

A summary of all discussion items follows.

## ISSUES & PRIORITIES

Kathleen summarized the outcome of the telephone and on line surveys taken in advance of the retreat. Following that summary, the group was asked to review and expand the list of priorities. The Fashion District should focus on moving into renewal and the next generation of the District. The list included:

- Clean and Safe are two programs, not one
- Marketing (Consumer, economic development, acknowledgement of changes)
- DTLA 2040
- Advocacy
- Budget
- Residential
- Social services
- Vision
- Pedestrian, vehicular connectivity
- Infrastructure
- District center – identify core
- Managing uses
- Public space management
- Acknowledge and create diverse neighborhood: “We never go back the way we came, find a different route”

After developing and discussing a list of ideas, each participant was provided with five votes to apply to priorities. Votes could be applied cumulatively, individually or in any combination. Results follow:

### PRIORITIES: TACTICS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The Board discussed tactics to advance each of the priority actions.

#### 1. ADVOCACY

Taken together, advocacy issues are the overall top priority of the organization with 23 votes .

ADVOCACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Space Management</li><li>• Pedestrian Experience</li><li>• DTLA 2040</li><li>• Vehicular/Bike/Pedestrian Connectivity</li><li>• Infrastructure</li></ul>	23 Votes
CLEAN AND SAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased cleanliness throughout the District</li><li>• Homelessness/Anti-Social Behaviors</li><li>• Real and Perceived Issues of Safety and Wellbeing</li></ul>	16 Votes
MARKETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consumer Marketing</li><li>• Events/Social Media</li><li>• Economic Development Marketing</li><li>• Research (i.e. sales data, ped counts etc.)</li><li>• Branding/Identity</li><li>• Educational opportunities for Brokers, Owners and Businesspeople</li></ul>	17 Votes

The Board and staff understand the importance of advocacy in all of the work of the organization. They spend 40-60% of their time on building relationships and advocating on behalf of the Fashion District and see it as a key tool in some of the more fundamental issues facing the future.

With DTLA 2040 on the horizon, the Fashion District needs to be fundamentally proactive in the future of the District. Zoning modifications, allocation of public resources to address infrastructure issues, public benefit priorities, grants and partnerships were all discussed as integral to the future.

**Action:** The Board will create an ADVOCACY AGENDA outlining the main issues to pursue and dedicate time and resources to the effort.

## **2. CLEAN AND SAFE PROGRAM**

The Board is increasingly concerned about the lack of funds to provide key clean and safe services. Over the years there has been little or no increase in assessments paid by property owners, therefore the program has suffered due to lack of funds. It was clearly acknowledged that the services were exceptional given the budget, however the re-investment is now more important than ever. In addition, the increase in anti-social behavior and issues related to street living further burdens the limited budget

**Action:** The Board sees the increase in assessment for these services as crucial to the future of the District, and will work with the property owner community in the renewal process to explain and encourage support for an expanded effort.

## **3. MARKETING**

There was significant discussion on Marketing in the district, and general consensus that the BID should have a marketing plan to address both consumer and branding, as well as economic development marketing tools and programs. Again, the Board was willing to help the broader community understand these efforts as essential for the future of the District. Ideas included:

- Assemble data and market information to provide a nuanced understanding of downtown's markets, sub-markets, opportunities and challenges. Create a "State of the Fashion District" tool for economic development efforts.
- Consider specialized data collection options such as pedestrian counters
- Bring owners, brokers, tenants and others involved with the marketplace into discussions on what is best for the District.
- Conduct a Brand Study and Identity
- Continue and enhance consumer marketing via social media and other more traditional approaches.

**Action:** Create a Brand marketing plan and dedicate time and resources to implement the plan.

## STATEMENT OF VISION EXERCISE

With the priorities of the organization clearly laid out, the discussion then moved to the overall vision and vision statement for the District. The Board came up with a list of words and phrases to help identify the aspirational vision of the District.

Those terms included:

- Dynamic economic zone
- Neighborhood feel
- Educational Initiatives
- Eat, live, play, work friendly
- Creative hub
- Diversity of workers – culturally
- Authentic DTLA experience
- Restaurants/entertainment district
- Build a community

Possible Vision Statements could include:

*THE FASHION DISTRICT IS A CULTURALLY, SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITY WITH RICH HERITAGE IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY; A DISTRICT THAT IS EVOLVING INTO A FUTURE THAT WILL INCLUDE RESIDENTIAL AND CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES WHILE MAINTAINING ITS ROOTS OF FASHION.*